

VZCZCXRO2535  
RR RUEHLN RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHDBU #1773 2710253  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 280253Z SEP 06  
FM AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8674  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1847  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1836  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1780  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1843  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1801  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1722  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1840  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1542  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1554  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1349  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1811  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS 1108  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0033  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0097

UNCLAS DUSHANBE 001773

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: SIX WEEKS OUT: NO STRONG CANDIDATE WILL CHALLENGE RAHMONOV

REF: Dushanbe 1766

11. (U) Tajikistan's opposition political party congresses have taken a stance not to participate in the election. Short of boycotting the election, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT) and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT) each decided not to nominate a candidate to run against President Rahmonov in the November election. In addition the parties will not throw their support behind any candidate.

12. (U) The SDPT and the DPT declared the election "irrelevant" and spoke out against the unconstitutional nature of Rahmonov's presidency. They will not consider the results of the November election legitimate. The parties as a whole are refusing to participate in the election, but will allow members to vote for whomever they choose. The DPT and SDPT, spearheaded by the country's preeminent constitutional lawyer Rahmatullo Zoyirov who helped draft the constitution, do not recognize the 2003 constitutional referendum that permitted Rahmonov to run for two additional seven-year terms. Both parties publicly stated that they foresee the election will not be free or fair.

13. (U) The IRPT congress on similar lines voted unanimously not to nominate a candidate, not to publicly support any candidate and also not to boycott the election. In addition, the party rationalized that it needs to work on its image. It does not want the people to view it as an opposition party that is a destabilizing force, a reputation stemming from the Civil War that ended nearly ten years ago. The Ambassador met with IPRT Chairman Muhiddin Kabiri September 26 to discuss this decision further. (reftel).

14. (U) The IRPT's Chief of Information, Saifullozoda remarked the decision was "in the spirit of the late Nuri." Saifullozoda suggested that just as a decision to remain silent is inherent

in free speech, the IRPT's decision to not to field a candidate is consistent with the practice of democracy.

¶5. (U) Rahmonov officially accepted the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan's nomination to run for a new term September 23. He was unanimously supported by the party's delegates. The Communist Party of Tajikistan (CPT) also nominated Ismoil Talbakov, a parliament member.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The SDPT, DPT and IRPT's decisions not to run a candidate do not come as a surprise. All three know that no candidate they field could possibly beat Rahmonov. In the SDPT and DPT's case, taking a stance and not participating is the loudest political message they could send and a more shrewd move than attempting to field a candidate. Although the IRPT took a similar stance, it distanced itself slightly from the SDPT and DPT, not wanting to be lumped in the category of "opposition" political parties. If the IRPT ran Kabiri, he and IRPT members would have faced harassment from the government. If the IRPT supported Rahmonov, it would create more tension and possibly a public party split.

¶7. (SBU) The OSCE has said that it will send 100 short term observers for the election with the caveat that if no credible opposition candidates emerge, it would consider rescinding the decision. With the SDPT, DPT and IRPT out, no true opposition candidate is eligible to run. Narziev's Socialist Party of Tajikistan, although considered opposition is not eligible to run since the party is not officially registered. We will see if the OSCE considers the pocket party and pro-governmental party candidates to be credible. END COMMENT.

JACOBSON